

# A twist for conservation plans: more doing - less planning, as tried at the 4200-acre Bay Shore Blufflands State Natural Area in Door County, Wisconsin

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**What's the twist?** Use Cathedral-building and Pattern Language to simplify Conservation and Wildlife Action Planning, Ecological Restoration Planning or Land Use Planning.

**What does it mean?**

To add Cathedral-building means we are knowingly incomplete, multi-generational, non-linear, to see the place as a laboratory, to effectively use periodic funding cycles, to do useful work that moves conservation forward. "... one's best contribution may be one that furnishes a plausible base and useful material for the next stage of development" (Holon, 1986).

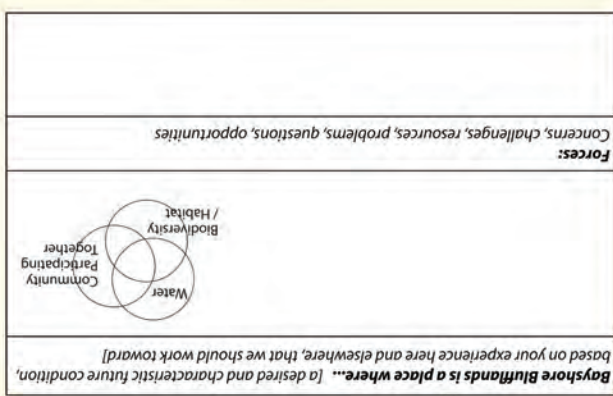
To add Pattern Language means we use expert knowledge to translate good conditions in an imagined ecological landscape to this particular place, then identifying the components or steps that could create the condition over time.

**Why?**

We explicitly accommodate our "community in a forest": large land areas of ecological value, also inhabited by people and working lands. The mosaic of property ownership and land use is a crucial factor, and the actions of people in this mosaic critical to conservation.

What is it about Cathedrals & "No" plan -  
 Simultaneous use, rehab, construction non-linear  
 Continuing development of patterns, rather than inflexible plans  
 Generations of artisans -  
 Teach & practice -  
 Collaboration is essential -  
 patterns - appreciate bigger picture  
 - build traditions  
 work in a laboratory  
 Cathedrals as laboratories -  
 applied experimentation -  
 use & develop local knowledge  
 use & develop patterns, not measurements  
 tolerance & resilience over strength  
 Whole - yet not -  
 Users perceive whole  
 there's a system  
 but details can be very different  
 and individually responsive  
 Social participation -  
 ongoing use & value to community

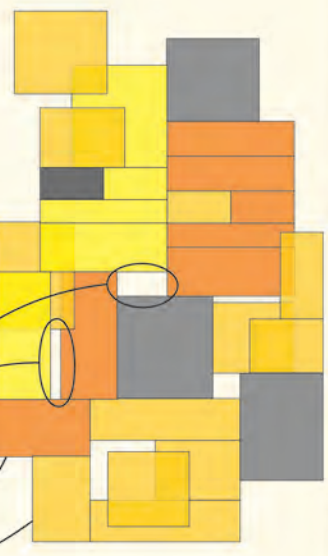
Facilitate discussions using Cathedral-building reminders  
 Have team describe ideas using Pattern Language worksheet



**How did it work?**

Our core team (two ecologists, two conservation planners) set the framework, facilitated, writes, and synthesizes. Our active team of eight experts in a range of fields (in two three-hour work sessions) drafted conditions, patterns, and projects.

As 42 drafted patterns were distilled to fourteen: Extensive prior site data was collected and organized. Knowledge gaps were identified, and some survey projects initiated and funded.



Small well-defined projects were proposed to test the conservation plan ideas described in the patterns. Three test projects were unanimously supported for match funding by local residents at the town meeting, and successfully implemented.

The patterns sketch the next steps in continuing to "build the cathedral" of Bay Shore Blufflands. Their projects are "grant-application-ready", step-wise, overlapping, making use of the place as laboratory with a community to engage. The patterns and their projects, individually and together, over time, make useful progress toward conservation.

**Could this conservation planning experience help you?**

Pattern Language allows the integration of elements across subject and time domains. Multiple domains are, by nature, introduced when we focus first on a desired future condition, then the forces that enable or constrain it. Draft ideas that "begin with the end", using our worksheet. When patterns emerge, think of actions, progressing from where we are, that could create the condition in 30 years.

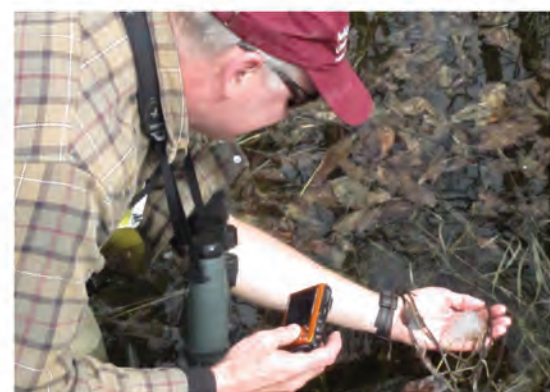
Cathedral-building ideas are included simply by reminding each other, as you plan, of the ideas from cathedrals that work well: start from what you know; rely on generations training generations; think of the place as a laboratory; etc.

Develop maps as needed to answer questions: for example, we made an "undeveloped lands" map that ignored zoning and past use and showed connectivity of open lands.

Begin to take action while planning: fill knowledge gaps, test project ideas. See our examples at right.



Community outreach: Local 4th-graders explore aquatic life in project area ephemeral wetlands



Filling knowledge gap: Spring surveys of breeding herpetofauna in project area wetlands and forests.



Batty for Bats Workshop - a Bay Shore Blufflands Neighborhood Conservation Project



Filling knowledge gap: Graduate student identifying aquatic macro-invertebrates from surface waters



Community outreach includes hikes and walks in the neighborhood. Here, a local expert discusses karst landscapes and hydrology.



Camp Dragonfly Workshop - a Bay Shore Blufflands Neighborhood Conservation Project



Filling knowledge gap: Biologists conduct small mammal survey, documenting short-tailed shrew

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## The Patterns

Brief excerpts from future condition statements and certain solution steps

### 1. Juneberries

Amelanchiers at every driveway! You know you're in Bay Shore Blufflands because of the Juneberry blossoms along the roads in spring. *Test project:* 100 free Juneberries planted in the community in 2014.

Amelanchiers at every driveway!  
A Neighborhood Conservation Project



### 11. Restoration in Progress

Ecological restoration progress is perpetually visible and community-supported in Bay Shore Blufflands, and residents know and control invasive species.



### 3. Resident Scientists

Residents and visitors to Bay Shore Blufflands are eyes and ears on the ground, knowing and sharing wildlife sightings. Citizens provide the data that guides conservation work in Bay Shore Blufflands. *Example:* Neighborhood water quality monitors along the shores and wetlands.

### 9. Dragonflies and Water

Waters flow freely and cleanly in Bay Shore Blufflands; mayflies and dragonflies abound and serve as indicators. The role of key local wetlands and springs is understood; long-term condition is documented and monitored. Identify and address surface water flow impediments. *Test project:* Dragonfly Workshop, a Bay Shore Blufflands Neighborhood Conservation Project. *Fill knowledge gap:* survey indicator aquatic macroinvertebrates.

### 13. Orchid Affection

We envision lands where a variety of native orchids are enjoyed for their beauty; they are understood within the context of the natural systems needed to support their vitality. Expand understanding of their presence and habitat needs within our landscape.

### 12. No Browse Line

Robust Hemlocks and resurgence of Canada Yew indicate a deer herd at a balanced level in the Bay Shore Blufflands.

- Door County Land Trust
- Conservation Easement
- County Park

### 7. More Forest

In Bay Shore Blufflands, healthy substantial forests support nesting wood thrushes, owls and woodpeckers. With a long-term vision of restored forest as a substantial component of Bay Shore Blufflands, we can work to connect forest patches, diversify forest structure, preserve and increase contiguous canopy, and buffer forested lands.

### 5. Land Succession

In the ownership mosaic that is Bay Shore Blufflands, both Door County Land Trust and private landowners have good knowledge and succession options to guide the conservation future of any parcel.

### 8. Bats

Increase identification and protection of cave habitats. At the same time, help people to value bats through echolocation monitoring and bat houses. Healthy bat populations mean we are doing things right in their forest habitats. *Test project:* Batty for Bats walk, a Bay Shore Blufflands Neighborhood Conservation Project.

### 10. Working Lands

Bay Shore Blufflands includes productive working lands and small enterprises that economically support residents, provide food for local people, and contribute to environmental quality. Thinking long term, working lands are transitioned to practices compatible with the land and supporting the conservation future.

### 2. Trails

Provide a modest but connected "Rustic Trails" system through Bay Shore Blufflands that connects the three existing Door County Land Trust Preserves and extends the experience of hikers, bikers, and other visitors to encompass the whole State Natural Area, while at the same time protecting critical habitat.

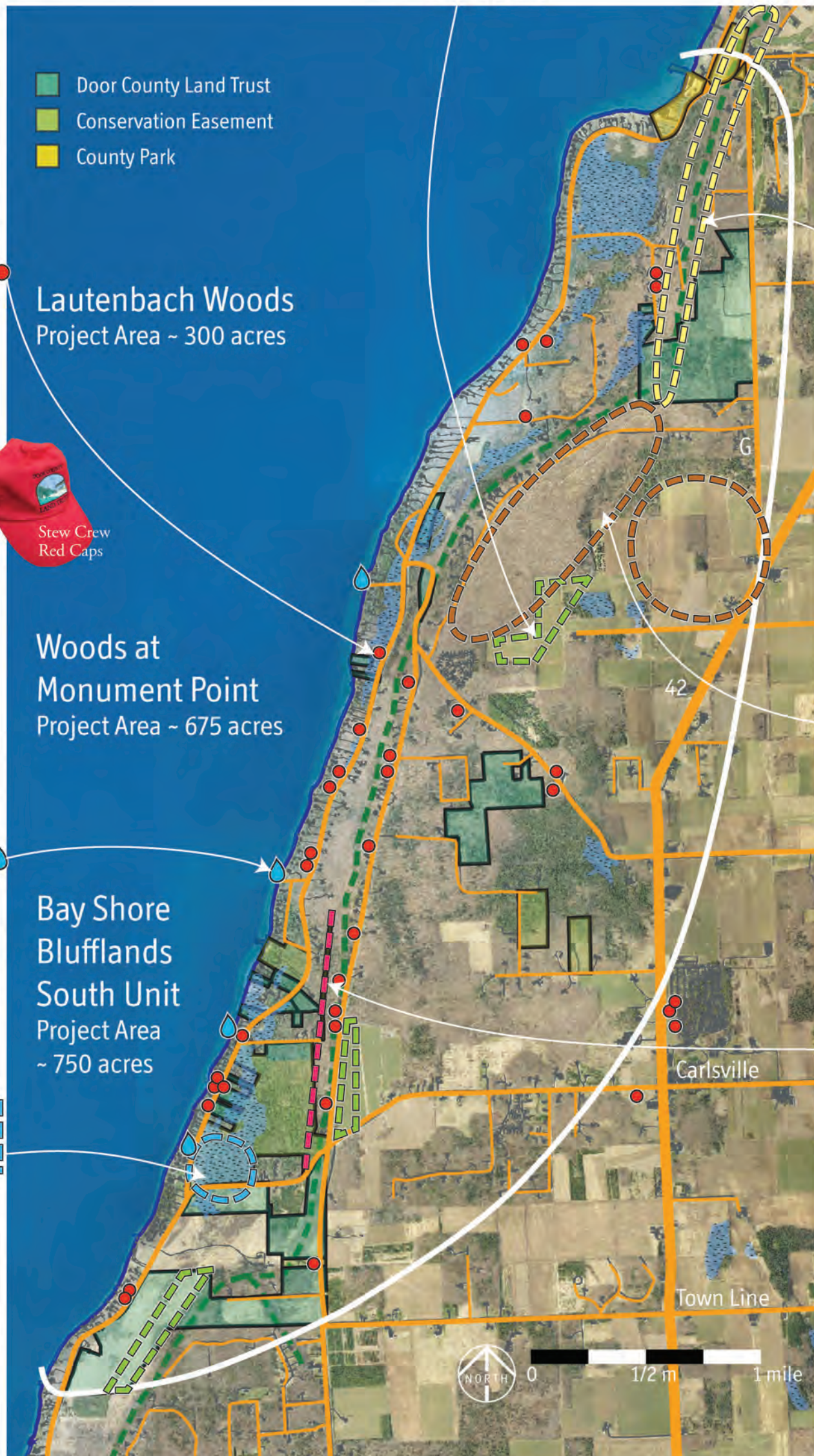
### 6. Drinkable Water

Throughout Bay Shore Blufflands, groundwater is drinkable, all the time. Groundwater samples (wells and springs) do not exceed the drinking water standard, and this standard is actively supported by local elected officials and local policy.

Lautenbach Woods  
Project Area ~ 300 acres

Woods at  
Monument Point  
Project Area ~ 675 acres

Bay Shore  
Blufflands  
South Unit  
Project Area  
~ 750 acres



### 4. Support

Land conservation and stewardship efforts in Bay Shore Blufflands are well-supported over the long-term in resources and in spirit. Develop a pipeline of resources in sustainable funding, ongoing research, and people, so that the protected lands within Bay Shore Blufflands can be perpetually understood, managed, enhanced and restored.

### 14. Podunk, the Witness Landscape

Each of our 4200 acres has a story to tell. Grinding ice, stout timber, fishing nets and settlers' hands form the clues written on the land in this place, first called Podunk. Let the landscape witness our "community in the forest" and the next stories in the land that embody conservation value.